

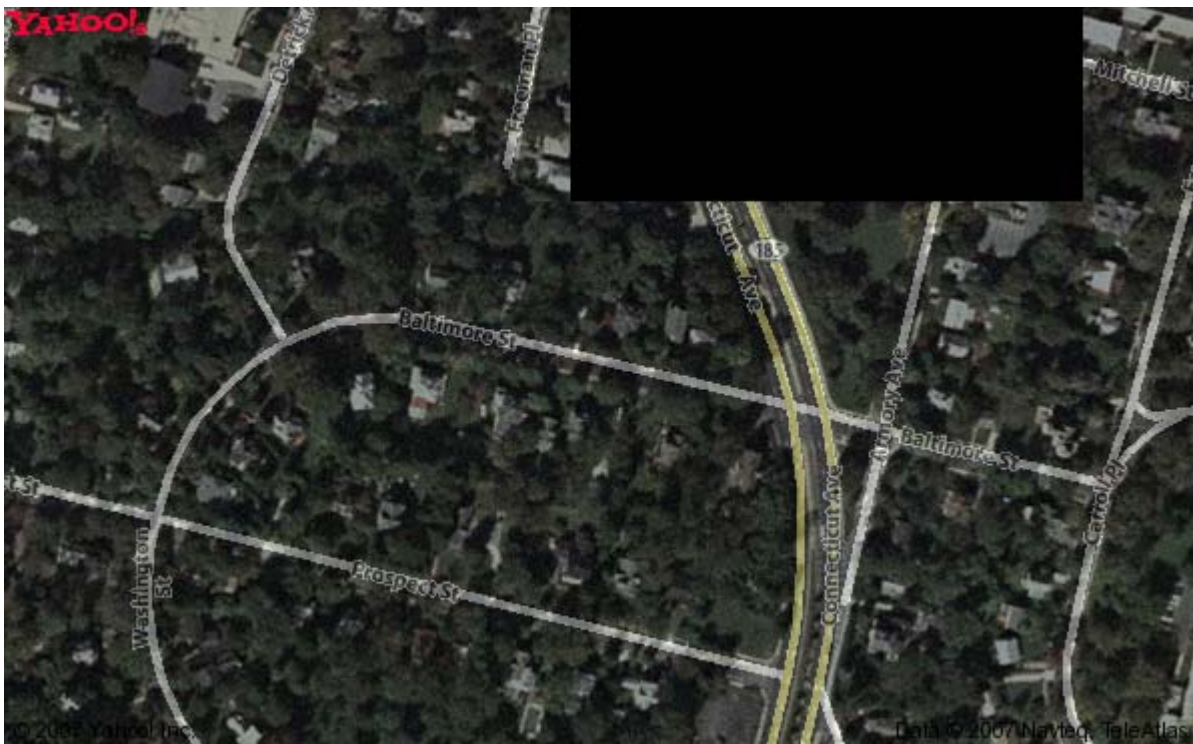


## **Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service**

### **POST INCIDENT ANALYSIS**

**3920 Baltimore Street  
Kensington**

**Incident F07-0043920  
May 7, 2007**



**Submitted by  
Assistant Chief Michael Prete**

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## 3920 Baltimore Street

### Introduction:

On May 7, 2007, just before 0200 Hrs, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Emergency Communications Center (ECC) took several telephone calls reporting a house was on fire with people trapped. Many calls reported that the residents were home and trapped in the house. The event was dispatched at 02:00:37 Hrs.

Units from Station 05 responded on the initial alarm. E51 and Chief 5 were the first to arrive. E51's officer gave an on the scene report of a single family home with heavy fire, and reported to side "Charlie" of the structure. The unit officer gave water supply instructions and assumed command. The RID was immediately dispatched by ECC. Chief 5 arrived shortly after E51 and assumed command at 02:03:19 hrs, setting up the command post of side Delta in the neighbor's driveway. At the height of the incident 7 Engines, 3 Truck Companies, 2 Rescue Squads, 2 EMS units, 6 Command Officers, 1 Canteen and 1 Air Support unit were committed to the event. At 05: the fire was declared "Out" and overhaul was initiated. The last suppression unit cleared the scene at 08:15:32 and the final unit cleared the scene at 10:27:15.

In the end, the house was declared a total loss. The incident claimed the lives of 2 adult residents and a loss of \$850,000 to the structure and contents. One Firefighter was transported well after the event with symptoms consistent with smoke inhalation and sprains.

### The Structure:

Balloon frame 3 story >3000 square foot house with heavy fire on the first and second floors

### Weather:

At the time of the fire, skies were clear, temperatures ranged in the mid forties and winds were from the west with gusts up to 10 MPH. Wind gusts did play a minor role in the fire spread.

### Fire Code History:

None

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Communications:

The dispatch of this incident was clear and accurate. All associated information was presented to units responding as it was obtained by additional caller information. Fire ground communications occurred on Incident 20 and Incident 21. Incident 20 was used for the majority of the traffic while staging utilized Incident 21 to communicate with apparatus in the staging area. Incident 10 was used by command to receive apparatus updates as additional alarms were dispatched.

Communications was an issue for the incident commander throughout the early phases of this incident. Arriving on the scene shortly after the first due unit, and positioning on side “D” of the structure in the neighbor’s driveway, somewhat obstructed by trees between the two homes, but with enough visibility to track changing conditions. The command post and subsequently, the Incident Commander became very accessible due to the close proximity of the command post and the unit operating on the fire ground. As such, a great deal of face to face communications occurred in the early minutes of the event as command officers arrived and reported to the command post. As a result of the Incident Commander being engaged in face to face communications, many radio transmissions were left unanswered and could have led to a catastrophic failure. It is this writer’s opinion that the use of command aides would have decreased this lost traffic significantly. Upon the arrival of Command Support 1, a command aide was appointed and far fewer transmissions were lost or ignored. In addition, the telephone proved useful in speaking with ECC when radio traffic was at its busiest.

The failure to use divisions created confusion early into the incident, loss of personnel accountability and potential hazards to personnel operating in the structure; Units continued to call Command directly as a result of the lack of early command direction. This became less of a factor as the incident progressed and division leaders became more entrenched with their groups. The Incident Commander could have done a much better job diffusing this early traffic by assigning groups and divisions and tracking the movement of personnel and units as they arrived and went to work

Units:

- First Alarm: (02:00:37) E52, E71, E201, E501, E191, AT19, AT51, RS29, A59, BC4, BC2, D5, RD2
- RID: (02:02:20) AT18, RS19, M21, BC1
- Task Force: (02:04:02) E211, E181, AT23, AR1, Canteen 5
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm: (02:08:41) E541, E231, E11, E61, E161, T6, T25, RS3, A25, BC3, BC5, D5, RD2

Operations:

**1<sup>st</sup> due engine: E52 – MFR Artie Hawkins**

No report following multiple requests.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Due Engine: E -71 – Captain Ray Sanchez**

Personnel: E-1: FF Drew Knight, E-2: Capt. Ray Sanchez, E-3: FF Ramon Long, E-4: FF Buzz Reising, E-5: FF Bill Barber

E71 arrives in the 2<sup>nd</sup> due engine position, notes E52 has their own water supply, and decided not to lay additional lines to secondary hydrants to preserve that hydrant for 3<sup>rd</sup> due engine. E-71 was located on Side A at the A/B side; in case E-52 needed other water and due to vehicle parking on the street.

E-71 personnel immediately approached the scene. Contacted command by radio and asked if standby crew was established or wanted even if rescue need was reported. No response from command. OIC and E3 entered on Side A and began search operations w/thermal imager. As search continued, assisted E-52 with hose line advancement. E4 and E5 were directed to secure a second hose line. Removed second line from E52. Heavy fire conditions were encountered and E-52 was calling for a backup line and their line was not fully charged. OIC exited building to see where the backup line was and noticed E3 was standing on Side A with a limp line. OIC advised command of need for the primary and back-up lines to be charged several times by radio. OIC directed E5 to return to E-71 and pull another line but was delayed in being charged because E-71 driver was assisting E-52 driver establish a secondary water supply. OIC entered the house again and attempted search of first floor and found nothing. Heavy fire conditions were met and worsening. OIC exited again and yelled to E5 about backup line when it was determined that the line from E71 was still not charged. OIC did a recon of Side C and D and advised command by radio that evacuating personnel would be appropriate due to lack of water. No response. OIC and E4 reentered the building from side A again and attempted search operations but were soon evacuated after evacuation tones were sounded. Based on personal information it is believed that in the first twenty minutes, a backup line was never employed due to lack of water supply/pressure.

After evacuation E-71 was ordered by command to become part of Division 1 with BC-2 as the division supervisor. The goal was to re-enter and extinguish fire on the first and second floors. Crew, with all personnel except driver completed task until Vibra-alerts sounded and forced crew to exit. Command ordered crew to Rehab. Rehab was not established at that time and A59 was advised to do so.

The actions taken were due to SOP/Fire conditions encountered/Orders from command.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Due Engine: E201 – Captain Richard Stolz**

Personnel: E1: MFR Brown, E2: Captain Stolz, E3: FFIII Barber, E4: FFIII P. Viands

E201 arrives in the 3<sup>rd</sup> due engine position

We were assigned the 3rd due position, gives the water supply instructions over the radio, identifies the hydrant at Baltimore St. and Detrick Ave. lays a line and proceeds to the fire scene. The crew, with the exception of the driver, approached E52 to pull one of their lines, but was told by the E52 driver that the line could not be charged due to water supply issues. Crew then went back to E201 and pulled the 250 foot, 2 1/2" line. At this point, E4 tripped over a supply line and fell, but got up quickly. At that time it did not appear that the firefighter was injured so the crew continued to their assignment. As the crew was preparing to enter the house on side A, which was reported by radio, the ISSO ordered us to extinguish the heavy exterior fire on side C. This continued for about 15 to 20 minutes until the E4 firefighter informed the OIC that his right knee was hurt when he fell. Command was contacted and advised of the injury and the firefighter was directed to side A to meet the EMS crew. He was taken by ambulance to Suburban Hospital. The officer of Rescue Squad 18 added an extra member of his unit to E201's crew so that the crew could continue firefighting activities.

Simultaneously, the E201 driver supplied the attack line being used by E201's crew and supplied water to E52. The crew remained on the scene until relieved on the scene by the Station 20 A shift crew.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Due Engine: E-501 – Captain Mark Montgomery**

Personnel: Capt: Mark Montgomery, D/O: Dave Heller, F/F: Trent Massenberg, F/F: Carl Nutwell

E501 arrived in the 6<sup>th</sup> due engine position

E-501 was dispatched fourth due and was planning to pick up E-201 line at Detrick and Baltimore, However E-211 arrived first and assumed the 4<sup>th</sup> due engine position. E501 positioned the unit on Connecticut Avenue, out of the way, and split the crew, with the driver assisting E-211's driver and the remainder of the crew advancing to the fire ground. Once at the fire ground, the OIC, E3 and E4 pulled an attack line from E-52 and established the RIT team. The crew reported to the officer on side A and advised him that we the crew had assumed the RIT. Radio traffic was two busy to get onto the radio, so the OIC sent the E3 to the command post to advise command that the RIT had been established and to advise the location. Once the defensive attack was over, the crew was reassigned to Division 1 with Battalion Chief 1 as the division supervisor. The crew remained as part of Division 1 until the fire was out, and crews were pulled to allow investigators to begin their role. The crew remained on the fire ground until they where released from the fire ground. It is important to note that even though E211 arrived in the 4<sup>th</sup> due position, E501 completed the RIT task according to SOP.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Due Engine: E191 – Captain Patrick Stakem**

Personnel: Captain Stakem (OIC), Master Firefighter Trent Lee (Driver), Firefighter Marvin Robinson.

E191 arrived in the 5<sup>th</sup> due engine position

The unit was positioned on the corner of Connecticut and Baltimore.

As the unit arrived on the scene, the OIC heard the radio traffic concerning the water supply issues. The OIC decided to leave the E1 Firefighter with the unit, to assist with water supply issues and investigate the situation further. The OIC and E3 approached the house, and recognized that there was still a lot of radio traffic concerning E52's water supply. The OIC noticed that E52 had their own hydrant with the soft sleeve charged and E71 was parked in front of the house just behind E52. There was one hand-line from E52 going into the house. The crew continued to side "D" when they again, heard radio traffic concerning the water. Recognizing the need for water, the OIC directed his E3 firefighter to assist with securing water. The crew returned to E71 and saw a hand-line coming from their rig going into the house. The OIC conversed with E71's driver to determine if he had a water supply. He stated he did not. The OIC directed E71's driver to give E52 his water. He stated he was trying to help. The OIC then returned to E191 and directed his driver to get a water supply to E52. The E3 hand dragged 200' of 4" LDH up the hill to E71. (I am not sure which engine got the water). He then dragged 4" across Connecticut Ave to a hydrant to complete the water supply. When the E3 and OIC completed the water supply operation, they returned to the house. The OIC directed the E3 to remove a ladder from E201 and throw it to a second story window on side "D"

After performing the actions described above, command ordered the house evacuated. E201 then assisted crews with setting up master streams on side "D". After the fire had been darkened down, command allowed crews to continue operating inside. E201's crew (E2 and E3) were assigned to division 2 with BC Jones. The crew conducted secondary searches of a couple of rooms and operated in a bedroom on the B/C corner. After operating for some time on the second floor, BC Jones ordered everyone off the second floor. There were several companies operating up there and it was getting crowded.

It is important to note that a great deal of time was taken assisting E52 with establishing a water supply. The driver of E52 did not appear to be able to resolve the situation. The second due engine driver that was just behind E52 was not able to correct the problems either. Command did not appear to be aware of the water supply issues or was not reacting to the radio transmissions or was not transmitting corrective actions by radio to E52's driver. The crew was unaware if E52's crew acknowledge the driver's transmission on poor water, however did observe E71's officer state the "line was limp" and crews needed to evacuate.

It is also important to note that the command presence in the initial stages of this operation were nonexistent. Command should have been more aggressive in getting the water supply issue corrected. E201 had laid a supply line into the scene and was in a position to help E52 with the water supply. They were never used. In addition, command was slow to react to the "Emergency Button" activation from E52 B. The crew member with the activation finally did answer up and stated it was unintentional. Command should have been more aggressive in finding that crewmember. There were several radio transmissions with no answer from command. The final observation I have is the "PAR". When the house was evacuated the first time, I was unaware of the PAR conducted by command. It appeared that they had no idea who was out of the structure or who was still inside. Another individual told me one of E52's crewmembers got

separated from the rest of the crew and bailed out of a window on side “B”. E52’s OIC did not relay that info to command. If this firefighter had not made it out of the house, no one would have known.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Due Truck: AT19 – Lieutenant W. Darrell Hout**

Personnel: T1:MFF/R R. W. Evans, T2: Lt. W. Darrell Hout, T3: FF3 Chris Kindel

AT19 arrived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> due truck position, shortly after AT51

The unit was positioned in front of exposure B

Upon arrival the OIC noticed that the 2nd floor windows on side A of the house exited to a porch roof. Side C was well involved. No ground ladders had been deployed at this time possibly due to the emphasis placed on rescue and reports of multiple entrapments. Our initial actions were horizontal ventilation and conducting a search.

The OIC and T3 proceeded to the side D entrance and entered with the intention of conducting a search of the first floor. Both personnel had forcible entry tools and the crew employed a thermal imager. While the crew operated inside, the T1 vented windows on side C. At this point crews were ordered to evacuate due to water supply problems. All personnel withdrew from the building. RS29’s OIC and the OIC from T19 did a face to face and coordinated a plan to search the 1st and 2nd floors. The OIC and T3 reentered the house with 2 members of RS29 and proceeded to the second floor. The crew was able to make it to the top of the steps, but encountered heavy fire conditions and had to wait for E71 to advance a hand line. After the hose line was in place, the crew was able to complete the primary search of the second floor. The T1 then entered the house and met up with the rest of the crew. After the search of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, the crew proceeded to the 3rd floor and started a primary search. The search continued until SCBA low air alarms activated. The crew reported to B/C 2, the division 2 supervisor, and exited the house.

It is important to note that neither AT19 nor AT51 were able to position on side A despite the units approaching the scene from opposite directions. Crews were evacuated twice, but a PAR did not appear to be conducted until late in the incident.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Due truck: AT-51 – Captain Trevor Forrester**

Personnel: (A) MFF Michael Gilroy, (C) F/F Frank Brennan and (D) MFF Richard Blair.

AT-51 arrived in the 1<sup>st</sup> due truck position.

AT-51 position was on side Alpha facing E-52. T19 arrived just behind AT51, so, to avoid confusion, the crew assumed second due truck responsibilities.

At-51 staffing is four, and the crew split into two groups, two inside and two outside. The two inside personnel entered the structure via, side Delta. AT3 started to ventilate by opening one window, while the OIC located the stairs. The structure was crowded with

firefighters trying to advance an attack line. AT3 and the OIC may have been inside the structure for approximately three minutes. Command advised E.C.C. to sound the evacuations tones. The crew exited the structure.

The outside crew comprised of the T1 and T4 Blair placed ground ladders on side Alpha, Bravo and Delta. An engine company, possibly E201, placed a ladder on side Charlie. The crew also placed lights around the exterior of the house. After that AT-51 crew stood by on side Delta.

AT-51 then assisted E-501 with setting up a heavy duty device on side Delta. Later the crew was assigned to over haul operations with Battalion 1 as Division 1 on the first floor. The crew continued to operate in Division 1 until relieved by the next day's crew.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Due Rescue: RS29 – Lieutenant Gamunu Wijetunge**

Personnel: RS1 – MFF Jon Hollen, RS2 – Lt. Gamunu Wijetunge, RS3 – MFF Mark, Chite, RS4 – MFF Dave Shaklan, RS5 – FFII Andy Vinh

RS29 arrived in the 1<sup>st</sup> due rescue squad position.

The unit arrived as the second unit on the scene behind E52 and positioned on the far side of the street opposite Side A of the house. The unit was several feet behind E52 which was positioned directly in front of side A.

Upon arrival the OIC spoke with bystanders who indicated an elderly male possibly trapped on the second floor and an elderly female possibly trapped on the first floor. Based on bystander reports the crew did not wait for two-out to be established. The crew was split into two separate search teams with the OIC and RS4 assigned to the first floor and RS3 and RS5 assigned to the second floor. RS29's driver remained with the apparatus upon initial arrival and then joined RS3 and RS5 who were conducting a search of the second floor.

During the first 15 to 20 minutes RS29 conducted a search of the first and second floor. The crew operating on the first floor used a thermal imaging camera during the search. During the search, an evacuation was ordered. Reentry was performed after approximately 5 minutes. The primary search of the first and second floors was completed. Further detail on the search and other activities is included in the RS29 unit report.

While not fully informed to the circumstances surrounding the evacuation order, the primary search was interrupted. Initially while conducting a primary search of the first floor smoke conditions were heavy rendering the thermal imager unusable (smoke obscured the viewing screen). After several minutes horizontal ventilation began to clear the smoke allowing the search team to progress more rapidly with their search, however it was then that the evacuation was ordered. At this point conditions on the first floor were still tenable, although the units were not aware of what conditions existed on the second floor at that point, and it was obvious that there were problems with water supply over the radio.



**1<sup>st</sup> Due DFRS Duty Officer: Battalion 4– Battalion Chief Ed Radcliffe**

Responded alone as the 1st due BC.

B/C 4 arrived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> due Battalion Chief Position

Positioned the unit on Connecticut Ave

Got dressed in PPE and walked up to the CMD Post. On the way, observed a 3 story Victorian style house with fire on the 1st floor, Quad. C and on Sides C and D.

Asked the IC (C5) for an assignment. C200, also in the CMD Post, assigned B/C 4 as the ISSO.

Completed circle check. Observed one 1 ¾" line going into the house through the door on Side D. House was an obvious balloon frame. Fire was post-flashover on the 1st floor, Quad. C, with heavy smoke conditions. There was fire visible through the 2nd story window, and pressured smoke coming from the 3rd floor window. The awning over the kitchen door on Side C collapsed as I walked by. Fire was rapidly spreading along the exterior walls on Side C and D due to flammable surface. Observed no positive impact from interior hand-lines.

Observed a firefighter (from E52) bail out of a 1st floor window onto the basement Bilco doors. Asked him if he was OK – and he said yes. He walked around to Side A.

Returned to CMD Post and recommended to the IC (now C200) that the interior crews be withdrawn so that the interior and exterior fire can be knocked down. Also recommended that although there are 2 occupants probably still inside, that the interior conditions were incompatible with life and that we should now be focusing on confining and extinguishing the fire only.

Crews evacuated with the alert tone being sounded twice.

Hand lines were used for the knockdown.

ECC advised that they had an EB from E52B. As the ISSO, responded to that activation and began to move to side A of the structure to investigate this activation. However, by the time the ISSO arrived on Side A, E52B said it was accidental.

After a 5 minute exterior knockdown, crews were redeployed for an interior attack.

Victim #1 was located outside Side C, near where the awning collapsed and burned.

Interior crews were making marginal progress on the interior.

Observed fire and electrical arcing in the basement through a small window on Side D. Investigated basement access through Side C with AT23. After forcing the door, found too much stuff piled in the basement to be able to safely navigate. Interior crews were unable to directly hit the fire. The fire growth was now obviously outpacing

extinguishment efforts and interior crews were beginning to ask for relief. The fire was burning uncontested in the basement and had reignited on the 3rd floor and there was heavy smoke was pushing from the attic. Reported to the CMD Post and recommended that crews again be withdrawn for defensive OPS. Crews were withdrawn without incident.

It is important to note that E52 did a good job with the initial size-up and initial IAP. Including getting and relaying information from neighbors about the 2 occupants. However, the initial IC did a poor job building on the initial IAP. Crews were making decisions on where they fit in rather than being organized by the IC. In addition, the 1st or 2nd hose line should have been used to sweep the outside of the house on Side C and D. The prolonged burn certainly sped up fire growth on the upper floors and attic. The IC should have recognized this. It became obvious that no victims were able to survive the fire conditions above the 1<sup>st</sup> floor by the time E52 arrived. Search and rescue efforts should have been concentrated on the first floor for the greatest potential for rescue. Reports were that the elderly female was living on the 1st floor where there was only heavy smoke and moderate heat. The fact that crews were taking a beating on the 2nd floor should have indicated to those folks that there is nothing to save there.

After the initial withdraw of interior crews, the ISSO advised the IC that there were no viable victims in the house and operations should be focused on confining and extinguishing the fire. Even though that message was understood, units continued to announce information concerning victim locations and searches taking place 30+ minutes into the incident. Having folks search for dead victims no doubt took resources away from extinguishing the fire.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Due DFRS Duty Officer: Battalion 2 – Battalion Chief Stephen Jones**

Responded alone as the 2<sup>nd</sup> due BC.

B/C2 arrived in the 1<sup>st</sup> due Battalion Chief Position

Positioned the unit on Connecticut Ave just south of the intersection of Baltimore

Donned full PPE with Thermal Imager to Command Post (Chief 5)

After reporting to command B/C2 was assigned as (interior). Entered structure on side D and proceed to 1st floor where E52's & E71's crew and officers were located. Established the "interior division" and advised the crews that I was going to the 2nd floor to find RS28's crew. Was ascending the stairs when E71 and E52 began to have water issues. Both crews were trying to communicate with E52A via radio and runner. Met up with RS28 and RC2-2 on the 2nd Floor. They advised that primary search on the 1st floor was negative and the 2nd floor was in progress. At this time command sounded the evacuation tone because of the water issue. All three crews and both the "Rescue Group" supervisor and the "Interior Division" supervisor exited to side D.

A PAR was conducted for crew operating inside the structure and the water supply issue was resolved. Command advised crews could re-enter the structure. B/C 2 was then assigned Division 1 by Command with E52, E71, AT19, & RS28. E-52 attacked fire on 1st floor while AT19 performed a secondary search of 1st floor. E71 and RS28 were told

to proceed to 2nd floor for fire attack and to finish primary search. E71 & E52 were sent to rehab and replaced by E191 & E181. After fire was knocked on 1st floor and searches completed I was reassigned to Division 2. Crews worked hard to try to get ahead of a well advanced fire on 2nd and 3rd floors, but were removed by command for defensive attack. With the change into defensive mode more water was needed. B/C 2 was temporarily reassigned to the "water supply" group and used 7-D to assist. E52 had their own hydrant but had a poor intake pressure. Ordered T6 to assist E201 in laying a second supply line from E201 to E52 and E201 was being supplied via E211. E71 also had a low intake pressure so used E61 to supply E191 to E71. After both engines were given a second supply line the water supply group was disbanded and B/C 2 returned to the command post.

After 30-45 minutes of defensive attack B/C 2 was sent into the structure as part of a "recon group" to evaluate the 1st through 3rd floors for overhaul. After determining the structure was sound and conditions favorable for an offensive attack, reported findings to command. Command reassigned B/C 2 to Division 2 with crews that rotated through as fatigue and air were evaluated. Overhaul was the primary focus of this operation.

It is important to note that, although Command was the 2nd unit on scene, not much direction or accountability was initiated. Both the 1st and 2nd engine drivers had issues with simple water supply tasks that should have been overcome. It appeared as if the 1st due truck was awaiting orders instead of engaging based on SOP. Once water supply issues were identified, E211's (supply to 3rd due engine) driver could not be found. Although ladders were placed, needed more. Finally, command officers on the outside could not be identified and would have benefited by vests to identify their function.

#### **EMS Duty Officer: EMS2 – Lieutenant Darryl Robb**

Responded alone as the EMS Duty Officer.

EMS2 arrived in the EMS Duty Officer Position

Positioned the unit on Detrick Avenue and Baltimore Street although the SB side of Connecticut Avenue may have been a better position

Arrived about 5 minutes after first arriving units

Upon arriving, carried two portables to monitor 7 Charlie and 7 Delta. Met up with M21 and A59 crews to ensure first aid and rehab sector in place. Took the actions stated above through SOP. There was too much chatter on the incident channel to ask for specific orders.

Observed Rehab personnel moving around, not staying at designated rehab area. Not realizing until later, a firefighter from E52, who was being evaluated by A59 crew for fatigue/rehab, had actually jumped through window of house and suffered minor burns to upper and lower extremities. He was subsequently transported. Because personnel were not constantly maintaining watch at rehab and first aid area, there was a delay in locating the injured civilian who was with the FM's. They took him to what they thought was rehab. The two injured firefighters and civilian happened over a short time span,

this fact and M21 crew being married up with the RIT, as well as crews starting to head to rehab stretched EMS resources quickly. Luckily, A25 was available off the second alarm.

Had command call for an additional ALS and BLS unit (M10 and A23). Called EMS1 (Captain Stottlemeyer) via cell to help assist (also his unit carries a RAD57 – carbon monoxide oximetry device). Utilized A23, upon its arrival to transport the injured civilian and had M10 head up the rehab sector.

**Wheaton Duty Officer: RC2-2 – Assistant Chief Jacob DeGlopper**

Responded alone as the Wheaton Duty Officer.

RC2-2 arrived as the second command officer

Positioned unit on the edge of Baltimore Ave behind RS29

Arrived after E52, C5, RS29, and possibly E71. Monitored the initial reports from PSCC of two people trapped, one on the first floor and one on the second. Queried command (C5) if he wanted me to take the rescue group, which was my impression of the most urgent need at the time. Got dressed and entered the house from the front door at the A-D corner. Observed the fire to be in the C-D corner. Was making way to the house, overheard that there were water supply problems from the radio traffic. Entered the house, PSCC was querying E52 for EB status. Met up with 3 members of RS29's crew on the first floor, as well as two from E52. The first floor at that time was fairly smoky, but not hot. Determined what had been searched, and what had not, command evacuated the building. It was clear from the outside at that point that anyone still in the building would not have survived.

Re-entered the house and went to the second floor with RS29's crew. The second floor was mostly clear of smoke at that point, but there was a hole in the floor most likely over the area of origin, as well as what sounded like ammunition cooking off in a closet in the same area. There was also some glowing lathe in the ceiling. Had AT19's crew searching the third floor, which was hotter and still zero visibility in smoke. There was some question at that point if the entire first floor had been searched, so moved back down there, and found that it had cleared enough to not require being on air. What was most likely the access to the kitchen was blocked by debris and further falling debris from above. Other than that area, the secondary searches on the first and second floors had been completed at that point. Advised BC Jones (division 1/2) of the same. Had heard nothing about the basement on the radio, and was looking for a way down while searching the first floor, but did not find one. Made another pass through the second floor before exiting to change bottles. Came back downstairs, noted that the first floor was much smokier than before, and that there was now fire coming from a furnace grate on the floor near the base of the stairs.

The announcement to evacuate again was made while outside, at which point was reassigned to Division B. Had RS29 and E71, operating a single handline off E71, initially on fire in the basement through a window, and then into the first and second floors, and roofline as we could reach it. Those crews then moved to the porch once interior operations resumed, and stripped siding and opened walls until sent to rehab.

**RID: B/C1 – Battalion Chief Michael Nelson**

Responded alone as the 1<sup>st</sup> due BC on the RID

B/C1 arrived in the 1<sup>st</sup> due RID Battalion Chief Position

Positioned the unit on Connecticut Ave

Delayed response due to multiple Command Officers on the initial assignment

Assigned to Division 1 by command to assess fire conditions prior to defensive operations. Located victim on Side C as Division C during defensive operations. Notified Command & FM's of priority 5 victim.

**1<sup>st</sup> Due Task Force Engine: E211 – Captain Stacey Daniel**

Personnel: Myself, FF Brian Carpio (driver), FF Dan Hinkle(E3)

E211 arrived in the 1<sup>st</sup> due Task Force Engine Position

Positioned the unit went to Prospect, turned right and positioned our unit at the hydrant at Detrick and Baltimore

Approached the hydrant at Detrick and Baltimore I realized that it was E201's line and that no one had secured their water supply. Ordered the driver to pick up the hydrant and establish the supply for E201, Announced this to command. Donned full PPE and directed crew with tools to command post. Once at Command buggy staged on side Delta with the task force crews, awaiting orders. While staged, was approached by BC2 and asked where my driver was. Was then sent to find him, pulling myself and my third from the fire ground operations. I spent an undetermined amount of time looking for him, then I returned to side Delta awaiting orders from Command. We were later assigned to Div 1 to assist with overhaul.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Due Task Force Engine: E181 – Lieutenant Penelope Ingles**

Personnel: E1: F3 Robert Claxton, E2: LT Penelope Ingles, E3: F1 Brent Sheely

E181 arrived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> due Task Force Engine Position

E181 was dispatched as the second Engine on the Task Force. We arrived as dispatched. As we were responding, Task Force Units were told to stage out on Connecticut Ave at Baltimore Street. I know E181 arrived in front of BC4, RS19, and some of the other first alarm units. I don't remember which Engines arrived behind us from the first alarm. (We were the only units on Connecticut Ave, besides AT18 and BC4). I did not immediately see any other units from the Task Force. AT23 did arrive a short time later.

Since we did not have an assignment from Command (other than to stage) we made a decision to turn around and park at Baltimore Street and Armory Ave. There was a fire hydrant directly across Connecticut Ave, from the working incident. This hydrant had not

been selected by the 1st or 3rd due Engine companies. We were in a position to assist with the water supply issues if needed, in addition to being out of the way for other units just arriving on the scene.

While we were arriving on the scene, we heard the frantic pleas from E52 for water. They advised they were out of water, and their crews were burning up inside. We were not sure why they had no water, after having called out their own hydrant. This was another reason why we chose the hydrant at Armory Ave. Thinking this hydrant might have been on a different water main.

As E181's OIC, I knew water supply was a high priority. I walked across Connecticut Ave to see what we could do to help. Meanwhile, Rob put the engine in pump gear and opened the hydrant to flush it. FF Lee (E191-A) saw me walking toward him, and started pulling his humat and supply line off. With humat in hand, he started walking towards me. I told Brent "Come on lets go help". My crew helped stretch the 4" supply line from E191, across Connecticut Ave to E181. Rob connected the humat to the hydrant and charged it immediately. We finished connecting our hoses to the humat, and were now providing pressure to E191. We were getting 90 pounds on our intake just from hydrant pressure. This completed a water relay. (E181 supplied E191, who supplied E71, who supplied E52.)

Once water supply was completed, Brent and I walked over to the Staging Manager. (I had done an initial face to face while passing him on Connecticut Ave. He was made aware at the first face to face what I was doing.) I advised him we had set up a water relay, and now E71 and E52 had water. I told him we were ready for our next assignment. He asked me who I was again. I told him "E181, 2nd Engine on the T/F". He told me "You were not supposed to stage, they wanted the task force units up at the house". I told him they dispatched us on 7-A, and told the T/F units to go to 7-D, and to stage. This came across my MDC and over the radio. (I double checked, and this information is captured on the CAD.) I then told him "Water Supply was a high priority! We have finished that job, now I am reporting to you." He got on the radio and asked command what to do with the Task Force Units. Command asked him for one unit to report to Division 2. Staging sent E181 to Division 2. E181 started towards the house, acknowledging our assignment to report to Division 2.

While Brent and I were headed up to the house, I confirmed we were both on 7-C. (I was on 7-D and I had him on 7-C, so we could have an ear out for both channels, and ongoing operations.) We did not take any hose with us, due to the long distance from E181. We took hand tools and hooks. We arrived at the house, went on air and entered. We entered through the first floor door located on side Delta. We found the stairs leading to the second floor/division. Standing at the base of the stairs was the Division 1 Supervisor. I told the Division 1 Supervisor what our assignment was. We were about to go up, when fire started coming through a metal grate to the left of the stairwell. (This large metal grate was in the floor, measuring approx 3' x 2'.) I decided to hold up, as the fire quickly intensified. I told the Division 1 Supervisor he needed to address it. He relayed to Division 2 Supervisor, and they were able to hit the fire from above. With the fire knocked, Division 1 Supervisor gave us the go ahead. Brent and I checked the soundness of the stairs, since the fire had engulfed the bottom half or so. With the stairs sound and stable, we went up. As we ascended, we noted there was a window to our

right, with a ladder in place. We took note, in case we needed it. (We knew if the fire happened once, it could do it again.)

At the top of the stairs I made face to face contact with the Division 2 Supervisor. He advised he wanted me and my crew to pick up the hose line, and to fight the fire. He asked how many were in my crew, and I said crew of 2. At this time, a crew was leaving, and they passed us on the top of the stairs. (A lot of people left and I don't know who they were with.) Division 2 Supervisor made the comment "Everyone out!" I asked "E181 too?", and he said "No, you have your assignment." Brent grabbed the nozzle, and started knocking the fire. The fire was coming out of the walls in one room, and we could see it flaring up in the attic above. (I was confused as why everyone left, and why we stayed. This was explained in detail the following shift when BC Radcliffe came by FS18 to discuss the incident.)

We were using the 1 ¾ hose line, and we were making little headway. We would get one area knocked, and then it would flare up again a few seconds later. This went on for about a minute or two. We had high heat and smoke conditions the whole time we were operating in Division 2. I heard over the radio the request to evacuate the structure. At this time, the attic became fully involved. Fire was still coming up and out of the walls in the room. I had been keeping an eye on the stairwell, while Brent was focused on attacking the fire. The fire re-ignited out of the grate. It quickly extended up the stairwell. Division 2 Supervisor advised us to drop our hose and to evacuate immediately. I made the decision this was not possible, with out serious injury. We were surrounded by fire. Fire had consumed the whole stairwell. Brent saw the fire in the attic, and was in the process of knocking it. He was not aware of the stairwell re-igniting behind him. I told Brent to redirect to the grate. I told him once we get it knocked, we are dropping the hose, and evacuating. We made a quick and dirty knock, with success, and made a quick egress. When we exited, the Division 2 Supervisor was following closely behind us. Division 2 Supervisor got out, and walked away. He advised command everyone was now out of the structure. Once outside, I took a quick PAR. Brent was with me, and I asked him if he was ok. Brent advised me while we were in the process of exiting he felt something hot hit him on the back of the neck, causing him to turn around. Brent saw the fire had banked down from the attic (Division 3). He made a quick hit, and then dropped the hose. I asked him if he was burned, and he said no.

It was at this time we transitioned to Defensive Operations. We were able to pull one of the two hoses out that had been used in Division 2. (The other was stuck, and was not budging.) We pulled out the 2" hose line, with a smooth bore nozzle. It was not damaged, and we used it for a little over an hour. Both hose lines that my crew used came off E52. (Both 1 ¾ inside, and the 2" line outside).

E181 was tasked with re-entering the structure, as part of the recon group. We were assigned to Division 1. We assisted with moving furniture, hooking walls and ceilings. After working inside for an extended period of time, we were sent to rehab. During rehab, command ordered us to carry in some equipment for the FM's. After completing this task, Command held the first alarm units. E181 was placed in service.

1. While we were responding down, I called out the 2 next closest hydrants to Rob. When we got close to the scene, Rob spotted one of the two hydrants I called out (the hydrant at Armory Ave). It was directly across Connecticut Ave. Rob asked me if I wanted to pop a U-turn, and hit the hydrant (at Armory Ave). I said yes. This served multiple purposes.

- a. Hoping the hydrant was on a different water main. At the time we did not know why E52's hydrant did not work, and why other units did not have water.
- b. Allowed other apparatus, better positioning. (Prior to the 4" being charged.)
- c. Assisted in shutting down Connecticut Ave for our own safety. A MCPD Officer who parked near us, helped shut the road down. This gave all units a safe area to work in. (Northbound was still open up to this point.)
- d. Later in the incident, E61 took position at the hydrant that was on the same side on Connecticut Ave. E61 supplied E191, and E181 was able to pack up. This allowed Connecticut Ave to be reopened to traffic.

2. Communications between those actively engaged and command was lacking. In the initial stages of the incident, it was very chaotic. Command appeared to be emotionally caught up in the incident. Unit Officers appeared to making their own command decisions. (Unit Officers were not being led by the IC, we were commanding ourselves.)

- a. All personnel working on the scene should have been informed on the Incident Action Plan. For example: When units withdrew for the second time to regroup, and then to enter for a more focused attack. Not having this critical information provided some confusion on my assignment to Division 2. It was not until I got an e-mail from BC Radcliffe, that we understood what happened with the first, and second evacuations. It is important to know what is going on, who is where, and what the assignments are. This also helps with situational awareness.
- b. I should have been told why I was going to Division 2, either by command, or by the Division 2 Supervisor. Nothing was said what tools or equipment we needed to bring.
- c. There appeared to be confusion on where the Task Force Units were supposed to be. This was confirmed by my discussion with Staging Manager. I had even chimed up on 7-D that E181 was staging. We never saw E211. I saw AT23, and they were staging out on Connecticut Ave.
- d. Someone asked who the 2 out was. We had confirmation on people trapped. We can operate without the 2 out in place.

3. The RID/RIG personnel did nothing but stand in the front yard. There were a lot of things they could have done, to assist personnel in case of a mayday. Windows could have been taken out. More ladders could have been put into place. My crew took out some of the windows on Alpha side, and I asked E541 to rack out windows on Delta side. (BC Radcliffe ended up ordering them as safety officer to do this task.) RID/RIG could have assisted in multiple ways, and still made themselves available for a mayday. This mindset "We can't do anything" has got to change!!

4. My unit was never sent to Rehab. We were finally "relieved, and sent to rehab" 4 hours into the incident. When we tried to find rehab, we were told it was no longer going on. We went to the canteen unit, and hydrated. Having been involved in dragging hose, assisting in the interior attack, then to defensive operations, was exhausting work. We were very busy, and did not get a break to hydrate. When we did, this was interrupted, as noted in my summary above. Everyone deserves relief, and a chance to hydrate.



5. My unit was lost in the mix, when we transitioned from Search/Offensive Attack to Defensive Operations. We had been part of Division 2- which was disbanded. When exterior operations commenced, we were never re-assigned. Command was in the process of doing a PAR, and asked us for our location, and assignment. It was not until this time we were assigned to Delta division.

6. Trying to find, and locate the Staging Manager was challenging at first. Chief 3-1 finally said over 7-D where he was located, and which unit he was in.

7. I am surprised that no initial debriefing was done with first alarm, and the other units who were actively involved on this incident. This was a significant fire. Two civilians were killed. Two fire fighters were hurt (unknown status). Units were placed in service, and sent home. Not a word was said. How do you, as the IC know everyone is ok? This was an emotionally supercharged incident. I know my Unit was on an emotional rollercoaster, and we did an informal defusing on the way back to the station. A quick meeting in the front yard would not have taken long. I have been on other incidents, where a quick debrief was performed. This is a good medium to relay information, how people did, and anything else that would be beneficial.

8. While operating the 2" smooth bore nozzle, we had poor stream reach, and low pressure. I did a face to face with E52-A. After two attempts, we got this corrected. E52-A also advised us later, when we shut down the nozzle, it made the pressure jump, affecting other lines. We tried shutting the nozzle down even slower, which helped a little. (E52-A said opening super slow helped.)

9. When we were hooking up our supply line, and soft sleeve to the humat, there was some confusion and concern with the humat. The humat had an end cap where a soft sleeve should go. There was a large amount of water coming out, despite the valve being closed. Rob advised he had not dealt with a cap before, and was concerned about the cap being under pressure. We advised E191-A, we needed to shut the hydrant down for 20 seconds, so we could take the cap off. E181, A, B and C each had a task, Rob shut the hydrant down, Brent took cap off, and I connected the soft sleeve. Working together, we had the cap off, soft sleeve, and hydrant back on in less then 20 seconds. This had no impact on the water supply to E191. Rob double checked w/ E191-A, and confirmed no interruption in water supply.

10. My crew overheard the Safety Officer ordering people off the roof on side Alpha. (Other Division Supervisors were also telling people to stay off the roof.) This direct order was not obeyed. Multiple orders were made to get off and to stay off the roof. Tower crews still disobeyed, and made their way up onto the roof. While Brent and I sat on side alpha operating the 2" hose line, we watched the roof burn. The Safety Officer's concern was valid. The roof was compromised, and no one had any business being on that roof.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Due Task Force Truck: AT23 – Lieutenant James Summers**

Officer AT23 with Mff Clements, and FF Evans

AT23 arrived last in that dispatch order.

Unit parked on Connecticut Ave. at Baltimore St.

Upon arrival took hand tools with SCBA and hand lights to side D of structure in driveway to house along with E211 and E181. After seeing crews inside from side D and not seeing any ladders deployed to this area, went to AT51 for ladders but there ladder compliment was gone. Went to E71 and took both ladders from that unit and deployed to side D of structure. Battalion 4 requested we make entry into the basement area and made forcible entry for crews. Also was advised to cut away shrubbery on side D to gain access to basement windows. Took saws from AT51 and proceeded to complete same. All personnel were pulled from bldg. at this time and we assisted in deploying blitz fire to side D and other hand lines there.

After defensive actions were complete, we were requested to be the rig for a recon team of Battalion Chiefs. After recon completed was pulled inside to do salvage and overhaul on second floor and then into the attic area. After completed there was released by command.

Cannot understand the issues with water supply, for as we were arriving there was water pouring from the rear of E52 and the soft sleeve that he had the hydrant sleeved with was hard and apparently full of water. Would really like to find out the issues with that... Thanks, anything further that you would need just let me know.

**Additional Command Officer: C5-4 – Assistant Chief Victor H. Esch, Jr.**

I responded as a result of pager activation (several minute delays from pre-alert notification). Arrived on scene shortly after final evacuation order was given. (I was turning on to Connecticut Ave, from Rt. 495 when the final evacuation order was sounded). Originally, I parked in lane #1 of north-bound Connecticut. Ave., behind a "Tower". Having second thoughts on the location of my vehicle, I re-located it to the shoulder lane of south-bound Connecticut Ave. At that point I was the Southern most vehicles in the South bound lane and remained in that position throughout the incident. Ultimately, the command bus parked behind my vehicle.

I walked to the scene w/ complete turnout gear and SCBA. Upon arrival at the scene, I observed no apparent problems w/ the operation of E71 who was supplying E-52, I continued to E-52, inquired if any assistance was needed, as the operator of the unit was in noticeable distress. During our exchange D/C Thompson C5-3 (off duty) intervened, advised that he would handle any issues related to E-52 and suggested that I continue to assist elsewhere.

I Reported to Command Post (Hawkins, Prete). Chief Prete requested that I assume "side D command" and that we would be initiating heavy duty devices (master streams) from sides B and D shortly, after scene PAR was confirmed. I confirmed PAR in my sector, and assumed command of my sector. I requested personnel to re-deploy hand-lines as follows:

3" line from side A to side D w/ "Blitz Fire" Nozzle from E-52

1 3/4 line from side A to side D, quad A/D w/ variable flow nozzle

1 3/4 line from side C to side D w/ variable flow nozzle.

Assisted in re-deploying 3" line from E-72 to position on side C, w/ "Blitz Fire" device.

During the re-deployment of hose-lines, the Safety Officer conveyed that during the final evacuation, E52-C dove out of the 1st floor, side C window, landing on the "Bilko Doors" leading to the basement. The firefighter landed so hard, that the doors were broken off the hinges and all but broke off into the stair well. I advised the IC of this report and having discussed it w/ the IC, set out to locate the firefighter. The firefighter was located, the crew of A59 and M20 were summoned to evaluate the patient. Although he objected, the ambulance/medic crews were instructed to transport the firefighter to the hospital for evaluation. I then reported back to the Command Post (brought drinks for the Command Post Staff) reported everything that had occurred regarding the injured firefighter to the IC and returned to my assignment at side D. Shortly thereafter, we were ordered to commence w/ master streams. As we were already setup, master streams from side C and D were immediately activated. Additionally, hand-lines were placed in service from side D as well. Well into this operation the line operating from side D, quad a/d was re-located to side A w/ E181's crew, as an electrical hazard existed (overhead wires falling from side of structure). The hazard area was cordoned off w/ scene tape and an announcement was requested advising all personnel of the situation.

Effectiveness: Heavy fire was present on all 4 floors of the structure and on the exterior siding on side D. Exterior was quickly extinguished with the "Blitz Fire" and hand-line. Basement was eventually extinguished by numerous "quick advances" w/ the hand-line through side D, basement window. Fire was well seated in concealed spaces, behind walls of balloon frame and areas unreachable from our position. Eventually we were able to penetrate these areas. Concern of potential structural collapse, necessitated a "safety position" be maintained while crews were operating w/in collapse zone.

1st Floor was quickly and easily penetrated and the fire knocked down using the resources at hand.

2nd Floor was more of a challenge as heavy fire existed and was deep seated. Penetration problems compounded by lack of pressure, and limited access (angle of attack from ground). Through constant application of heavy volume of water, 2nd floor was eventually knocked, after prolonged application of heavy volume of water. Lack of pressure contributed significantly to inability to penetrate combined w/ distance. Hand-line operating from side D was essentially useless, as pressure sometimes was that of a garden hose. After consulting w/ E-52 operator regarding his water supply, I requested that E-211 increase pressure to E-52 (52 was supplied by E71 to its immediate rear and E-211 approx 400 feet to its front). 211 advised we had all he could give. I recommended to the nozzle man on the hand-line to check the variable flow nozzle to be sure it was not in a "flush" position or otherwise high volume setting, it was. The adjustment was made and the ability of the hand-line was significantly improved and was subsequently able to penetrate all remaining areas. Additionally, the 2nd 1 3/4 line operating from "side D" was also experiencing wide variables of pressure/volume. The decision was made to replace the variable flow nozzle w/ the "Stinger" nozzle w/ a pipe from E-191. This change made a remarkable difference.

3rd floor/Attic: much of the roof was burned off in this area, thus, there was not much of an extinguishment problem. There were 2 concealed areas that were generally inaccessible from the ground regardless of direction/orientation of the ground-based attempt, behind the chimney closer to side B, in the middle of the house. Despite all attempts from the ground, these areas were ultimately knocked down during the final phase of overhaul from the interior.

Note: this experience emphasized the need to switch nozzles depending on their usage. The variable flow nozzles are ineffective when operating in an exterior/defensive mode or when presented w/ a heavy fire condition where deep penetration is necessary.

Quadrant C/D was cordoned off as a crime scene w/ yellow scene tape. However, a steady flow of curious personnel were constantly going around the barrier and were constantly being requested to leave the area.

Regarding Personnel assignments: although the crews assigned to side D varied a bit, as crews rotated through rehab, we maintained 3-4 available crews at all times. PAR was checked at regular intervals, a collapse zone was established and frequent reports/updates were transmitted to the IC. My portable was not functioning properly: it received fine, but would not transmit, thus all reports and communications were face-to-face.

Eventually exterior operations (heavy duty devices) were terminated. Hand-lines were re-deployed to side 1 at the front door, the porch roof and the front porch, as well as a back-up/RIT line. Crews were established as RIT, Porch, Roof, and Division 1 and Division 2 as overhaul commenced. I was re-assigned as "Safety Officer". Aside from regular scene assessments/reports and PAR evaluations the remainder of the incident was unremarkable and with out any further incident. Personnel were requested to move all vehicles parked on Connecticut Ave. I stopped at the Canteen and grabbed a drink on my way to move my vehicle. I returned to the Command Post, re-assumed the "Safety Officer" position for a brief amount of time and was released.

Additional Note:

E52 –

On Sunday evening, May 13, the crew of E52 returned to the scene of the Baltimore St. fire to see how much pressure was flowing from the hydrant we used last weekend. The plug was nosed and connected with the front intake. The pressure from the hydrant was approximately 75-80 psi.

Next, we went to the hydrant at Connecticut/Baltimore, (northbound lane) and opened it up. At that time, the intake pressure dropped to about 30 psi. In the middle of this, we attempted to close the front intake utilizing the switch on the panel where intake pressure was lost (expected because of the gate close) but the indicator light remained in the yellow/not fully open/closed position. When it was attempted to open and close it numerous times after that, it failed to do anything under pressure and not under pressure. It took approximately 5 minutes of fiddling with it until it opened again. This is when we then tested the Baltimore/Detrick hydrant where the pressure dropped to about 20 psi. Once this test was complete, attempts to close the intake again were unsuccessful. It would not close via the switch (there was still intake pressure and the indicator light was in the yellow position). The engine was taken out of pump gear, turned off and then on resetting the computer and we re-engaged the pump to finally close it. Since that time the unit has been placed out of service and we will be notified after further investigation.

Identified Issues:

This incident posed many challenges. Because a poor command structure was in place and no accountability, strategy or plan was created by the first arriving command officer, crews were working with little direction or goals. Certainly, the obvious rescue need drove the initial actions, but SOP driven crews performed these tasks with little or no supervision.

When I arrived, the following issues were on going:

- Balloon frame 3 story >3000 square foot house with heavy fire on the first and second floors
- Reported 2 civilians confirmed trapped
- First due engine crew screaming for water
- First due engine driver reporting a faulty hydrant
- Initial Incident Commander with no recordation of crews or assignments
- Initial Incident Commander could not articulate the IAP
- EB activation by AT51 and E52B
- E71B advising they were at the front door with back-up line and no water

Initial concerns and considerations:

- Determine which and where units were operating
- Evaluate the structure for victim survivability and structural integrity
- Resolve water supply issue
- Resolve EB statuses
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the offensive attack

Based on the issues above, and probably other things that I can not remember, my initial thought was, once the EB was resolved, was to start over. I wanted to pull people out, count heads and, without wasting too much time or allowing the fire to advance too far, attempt an aggressive interior attack. While I was convinced the victims were deceased, I still wanted to make an effort on the outside chance an unaffected portion of the house remained survivable. However, the longer this went on, the less I was concerned about rescue and the more I was concerned about hurting a firefighter to perform a victim extraction.

Analysis:

In the end, I felt the early stages of this incident went poorly, that I was not reacting quickly enough and that I allowed the many errors of early command to undermine what I knew to be a better tactical plan. I felt that the initial PAR was

incomplete even though I had confirmation from the interior division supervisors following a face to face conversation, that all were accounted for. However, following the evacuation, I believe the IAP was effective and safely implemented. This incident demonstrates how critical early, effective and competent command presence is. This event could have had catastrophic results for our fire and rescue department.